

Creating the 21st Century Workforce: Developing Coordinated Regional Strategies Central Area Strategic Plan

MWA:

Central Area Michigan Works! Consortium
PO Box 368
Greenville, MI 48838

Contact Person:

John Van Nieuwenhuyzen
616-754-9315, ext. 3346
johnvan@8cap.org

Introduction

The regional partners came together in the name of the 21st Century Workforce Initiative for the purpose of collaborating to:

- ◆ Develop a coordinated approach to working with employers;
- ◆ Assess the local workforce and economy;
- ◆ Define and develop coordinated, regionally led rapid response services;
- ◆ Develop regional layoff prevention and business enhancement services;
- ◆ Focus on developing, attracting, and retaining talent to build and support the 21st Century economy; and
- ◆ Develop and implement a communications strategy targeted at partners, employers, and the general public.

The CAMWC Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has embraced the opportunity to provide regional leadership in addition to participation in the development and/or strengthening of regional strategies to address both the immediate and longer-term workforce needs of employers as the parameters of this grant.

The Central Area Michigan Works! Consortium region (Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella, and Montcalm Counties) has experienced significant employment loss over the past three years and the loss is expected to continue in the future. An analysis of the unemployment rate for each county within the region over the past 12 months illustrates the rise in unemployment. Isabella County is the only county with a rate below the statewide rate.

The most significant job loss has been in the Manufacturing sector, specifically Durable Goods. According to the Industry Employment Forecasts, 2002-2012, developed for Central Michigan by DLEG/LMI, durable goods manufacturing represented 15.7 percent of employment in 2002 and a forecast of 12.2 percent in 2012. This forecasted loss represents two significant issues of concern: real job loss opportunities (a decline of 2,150 manufacturing jobs) and a shrinking share of total employment opportunities (Table 1 - Industry Forecasting). However, the manufacturing industry continues to account for a significant number of total jobs. Another distressing fact realized from the industry forecast is the skill and/or wage disparity between manufacturing jobs and those industries seeing the greatest employment opportunity (Education Services, Leisure & Hospitality, Retail Trade). Waiters, waitresses, and cashiers account for the greatest job openings and job growth and yet the average/median wages for these jobs are significantly less than those for manufacturing jobs.

The changing and competitive global economy has significantly impacted the regional economy resulting in a direct/indirect influence on businesses, workers, families, communities, and in general, the quality of life. This regional planning grant will

provide an opportunity to secure a future for the region through economic transformation.

Organizational Partners, Roles, Responsibilities

The CAMWC WIB is distinctly positioned to provide a leadership role to this project and to the broader goal of economic transformation since they are not tied to a single political district or geographic boundary. Board leadership and membership has the ability to engage in collaborations and partnerships with other MWA WIBs when the need arises. The WIB has the ability to bring stakeholders together (a current project task under the Board's strategic planning initiative); to promote a data-driven approach to decision-making; to help build consensus around regional priorities; and to support the implementation process.

In addition to the WIB, it is anticipated the following organizations/entities will play a significant role in establishing a regional plan.

- ◆ Economic development (Local economic development agencies are represented on the WIB)
- ◆ K-16 school system (Community College including the M-TEC, ISDs, K-12 Superintendents, and Adult Education [where available])
- ◆ Private sector (beyond the WIB including Chambers)
- ◆ Organized Labor (representation from organized labor have been participates of the Greenville Taskforce)
- ◆ Non-profit organizations (such as county collaboratives, ministerial associations or faith-based organizations, community mental health, public health)
- ◆ Government - Township, City, County and other Political entities (Local elected officials, city and county government, federal and state representatives and senators)
- ◆ Media - will be vital to communicating the efforts of the regional plan and will give a wider audience an opportunity for input.

A complete list of regional partners is included at the end of this document.

Alignment of Existing Regional Efforts with 21st Century Workforce Initiative

In 2005, the Central Area Michigan Works! Consortium WIB engaged in a strategic planning project, specifically to assess the regional priorities due to a significant erosion of the region's economic base. As a result of a SWOT analysis and careful consideration of strategic action areas, the WIB identified three priorities that set the agenda for strategic action:

- ◆ **Business Growth and Start-Up**
- ◆ **Promoting the Region**
- ◆ **Education Transformation**

It is the opinion of the WIB that regional planning and strategic action relating to the aforementioned priorities and the involvement of key stakeholders will bring economic and systematic transformation and will support a vision of hope and prosperity for the region. Hope must be nurtured, accepted, and shared for any economic transformation to be successful.

The Central Area region is within or on the cusp of a multitude of local economic initiatives. In order to achieve the development of a coordinated regional strategy, the Central Area will bring our knowledge of these initiatives and where feasible, invite key representatives to participate in discussions of relevant strategy and action planning.

Focus of the Coordinated Regional Strategies in the Context of the 21st Century Workforce Initiative

Using a Steering Committee comprised of representatives from [workforce development, economic development, city, county & state leadership, Montcalm Community College, K-12 education, and local chambers of commerce], the regional planning process will focus on the elements discussed in detail below, as they relate to Business Growth and Start-Up, Promoting the Region, and Education Transformation.

Develop a coordinated approach to working with employers

Strategies and Activities

Steering Committee members from workforce and economic development will do the following work in order to establish comprehensive regional employer services:

- Map the current collaborative employer services practices between MEDC, local economic development agencies and Michigan Works! and explore additional opportunities to co-market services;
- Share employer outreach protocols, programs and services and initiate cross-training as needs are identified;
- Identify base industries and emerging sectors as evidenced by outreach patterns; and
- Explore the feasibility of adopting an information-sharing tool, a standardized outreach instrument, and a referral process for use by all workforce and economic development agencies.

Key Partner Responsibilities

See list of “Regional Partners” on page 11.

Milestones/Timeframes

Strategy/Activity	Milestone/Timeframe
Develop and distribute survey for partner information – focus on employer protocols, programs and services	June 11, 2007
Create a employer services matrix identifying partner protocols, programs and services	June 29, 2007
Identify participants and schedule meeting of subcommittee to focus on base and emerging industries	July 12, 2007
Conduct subcommittee meeting to discuss sharing information, standardizing protocols, and a referral process	August 17, 2007

Current Status

The Central Area is using State technical assistance through Kathy Stocking from CSW. Ms. Stocking is in the process of developing the partner survey for distribution in early June.

Assess the local workforce and the economy

Strategies and Activities

An advantage in rural environments is having first hand knowledge/experience of who is doing what and where there are service gaps due to a lack of resources as opposed to misalignments of resources. The Central Area Michigan Works! Consortium is also uniquely positioned to benefit from the West Michigan and the Mid-Michigan WIRED initiatives, as well as the West Central Michigan Health Care Regional Skills Alliance. Regional partners will work with one another (and, where relevant, the State) to:

- Develop a plan for collecting and disseminating data regarding the local workforce and economy;
- Identify and inventory regional workforce and economic development initiatives, services and funds;
- Assess the current and future state of manufacturing in the region;
- Identify misalignment, duplication, and gaps in services and funding; and
- Develop plans for maximizing alignment of resources and funding to meet regional workforce and economic development needs.

Key Partner Responsibilities

See list of “Regional Partners” on page 11.

Milestones/Timeframes

Strategy/Activity	Milestone/Timeframe
Develop and distribute survey for partner information – focus on information about workforce and economic development data; regional workforce and economic development initiatives and funds	June 11, 2007
Clarify State assistance with regional data (LMI; University of Michigan; other); request and collect relevant data; begin assessment of manufacturing sector	June 29, 2007
Identify participants and schedule meeting of subcommittee to focus on misalignment, duplication, and gaps in services and funding; maximizing alignment	July 27, 2007

Current Status

Ms. Stocking is in the process of developing the partner survey for distribution in early June.

Define and develop coordinated, regionally based rapid response services

Strategies and Activities

While our four-county region currently benefits from the State’s and MWA-led rapid response programs, the creation of additional methods can better serve dislocated workers. Over the past few years, the Central Area experienced a mass lay-off and a **transition-team taskforce model** was used to communicate the needs of the dislocated worker and his/her family as they transition to new employment. A tremendous amount of work occurred in workforce and economic development over the course of this catastrophic event and much of the substance and related processes have been documented. In the joint interests of continuous improvement and information sharing, regional partners will do the following:

- Review documents relating to the Electrolux closure and prepare a draft Regional Rapid Response Model; and
- Obtain feedback and input from regional partners, finalize the Model and share it with the State.

Key Partner Responsibilities

See list of “Regional Partners” on page 11.

Milestones/Timeframes

Strategy/Activity	Milestone/Timeframe
J. Bloomfield and K. Stocking meet to discuss Electrolux closing; identify other partners to interview	June 7, 2007
Complete interviews with relevant regional partners	June 29, 2007
Create regional rapid response model; circulate to partners for review/comments; finalize	July 20, 2007

Current Status

Ms. Bloomfield and Ms. Stocking are conducting preliminary discussions and are holding a formal meeting June 7.

Develop regional layoff prevention and business enhancement services

Strategies and Activities

A new lay-off aversion component will build upon the current strengths of the State’s program. The facilitation process will lead partners to the creation of a plan to coordinate and market existing resources to business, industry, and the workforce. The resulting communication and cross-training from this facilitated effort will immediately benefit economic and workforce development, education, and employment partners.

Regional partners will:

- Identify resources and protocol for all agencies (lead and support) that provide lay-off prevention and business enhancement services and explore opportunities to coordinate those services across the region;
- Identify and share information about companies that would benefit from technical assistance provided through the Great Lakes Trade Adjustment Assistance Center and Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center incumbent worker training to avert lay-off and increase global competitiveness; and
- Investigate the business enhancement services/business solutions technical assistance training offered by the State through the South Central Michigan Works! Agency and register appropriate regional partners for the training.

Key Partner Responsibilities

See list of “Regional Partners” on page 11.

Milestones/Timeframes

Strategy/Activity	Milestone/Timeframe
Develop and distribute survey for partner information – focus on layoff aversion and business enhancement services	June 11, 2007
Identify participants and schedule meeting of subcommittee to focus on opportunities to coordinate services; companies to potentially benefit from State technical assistance	August 13, 2007
Staff attend business solutions training	August 22-23; September 17-18; October 16-17; November 28-29

Current Status

Ms. Stocking is in the process of developing the partner survey for distribution in early June. MWA! staff members Diane Hazlewood, Casee Sackett, and Julie VanderVeen are currently scheduled to participate in business solutions training August 22-23, September 17-18, October 16-17, and November 28-29.

Focus on developing, attracting, and retaining talent to build and support the 21st Century economy

Strategies and Activities

The State focus on developing, attracting and retaining talent is in perfect alignment with the Central Area’s priorities for business growth, promoting the region, and education transformation. The Central Area has completed implementation of the 21st Century Scholarship Program. [Provide some detail about how this occurred, if possible.] Regional partners will:

- Assess the skill sets of the current workforce;
- Use available data (including the University of Michigan Skills Information Model) to identify growth/emerging industries, occupations, and required skill sets;
- Assess the gaps and identify opportunities for sharing the information with the community, including workers, businesses, and educators;
- Research rural economic models across the country and identify ways to adapt successful approaches to the Central Area region; and

- Develop plans for transforming the education system (K-16) to meet the demands of growing/emerging industries and ensure a ready supply of future workers.

Key Partner Responsibilities

See list of “Regional Partners” on page 11.

Milestones/Timeframes

Strategy/Activity	Milestone/Timeframe
Develop and distribute survey for partner information – focus on assessing skills of the current workforce	June 11, 2007
Clarify State assistance with regional data re skills (LMI; University of Michigan; other); request and collect relevant data	August 27, 2007
Identify participants and schedule meeting of subcommittee to focus on assessing skills gaps and sharing information with a variety of audiences	September 17, 2007
Conduct subcommittee meeting to discuss sharing information, standardizing protocols, and a referral process	October 15, 2007
Research rural economic models and share with subcommittee	October 15, 2007
Discuss education transformation with subcommittee, WIB, and 21 st Century Steering Committee; develop plan	December 10, 2007

Current Status

Ms. Stocking is in the process of developing the partner survey for distribution in early June.

Develop and implement a communications strategy targeted at partners, employers, and the general public

Strategies and Activities

The Central Area acknowledges that a comprehensive communications campaign is critical to the successful implementation of strategic plans for transformation of the regional economy. Therefore, regional partners are committed to developing a

communications plan for each of the focus areas discussed above. To that end, regional partners will:

- Identify *what* needs to be communicated around any of the five focus areas;
- Determine the *who/audience* for the things that need to be communicated;
- Agree on *how* information should be shared and identify available resources for delivery; and
- Establish a timetable for communications.

Key Partner Responsibilities

See list of “Regional Partners” on page 11.

Milestones/Timeframes

Strategy/Activity	Milestone/Timeframe
Develop and distribute survey for partner information – focus on communication needs and resources	June 11, 2007
Identify participants and schedule meeting of subcommittee to focus on communications	June 29, 2007
Conduct subcommittee meeting to discuss communications	July 20, 2007
Develop communications plan	August 17, 2007
Implement communications plan	Ongoing

Current Status

Ms. Stocking is in the process of developing the partner survey for distribution in early June.

Regional Partners

Name	Agency/Representing	E-mail	Telephone
Bloomfield, Janet	CAMWC	janetb@8cap.org	616/754-9135, x3337
Van Nieuwenhuyzen, John	CAMWC	johnvan@8cap.org	616/754-9315, x3346
Burns, Julianne	City of Belding/City of Ionia	julianneburns@ci.belding.mi.us	616-794-4800
DeBruine, Randall	City of Belding/City of Ionia	rdebruine@ci.belding.mi.us	616/794-4800
Gruesbeck, Bryan	City of Greenville	bgruesbeck@greenvillemi.org	616/754-5645
Bosanic, George	City of Greenville	gbosanic@greenvillemi.org	616/754-5645
Christensen, Bobbie	DHS	christensenb@michigan.gov	989/831-8400
Dunlap, Dennis	Gratiot/Isabella RESD	ddunlap@edzone.net	989/466-4832
Wetzel, Carol	Greater Gratiot Dev.	carol.wetzel@gratiot.org	989/463-2083
VanderLaan, Kathy Jo	Greenville Chamber of Commerce	kathyjo@greenvillechamber.net	616/754-5697
Jeltema, Ryan	Greenville Daily News	rjeltema@staffordgroup.com	616/754-9301
Foster, Steve	Greenville Tool & Die/WIB	sfoster@gtd.com	616/754-5693
Smith, Diane	Ionia County Economic Alliance	dsmith@msu.edu	616/527-8014
Hubbard, George	Ionia County ISD	ghubbard@ionia-isd.k12.mi.us	616/527-4900
Burns, Don	MCC	donb@montcalm.edu	989/328-2111
Suchowski, Maria	MCC	msuchowski@montcalm.edu	989/328-2111
Tammone, William	MCC	wtammone@montcalm.edu	989/328-2111
Wood, Leslie Anne	MCC	lesliew@montcalm.edu	989/328-2111
Schaible, Sue	MDLEG	schaibles@michigan.gov	517/335-3325
Kratz, Bill	MEDC	kratzw@michigan.gov	517/373-9121
Flory, Brenda	MEDC		517/373-9808
Perkins, Karen	Michigan Works!	kdperkin@ionia-isd.k12.mi.us	616/527-1360
Bennett, Carolyn	Middle MI Development Corp.	cbennett@mmdc.org	989/772-2858
Mogdis, Franz	Montcalm Alliance	fmogdis@maisd.com	989/831-5261
Stamas, George	Montcalm Area ISD	gstamas@maisd.com	989/831-5261
Berchtold, John	Montcalm County Administrator	jberchtold@co.montcalm.mi.us	989/831-7300
Johansen, John	Montcalm County Commissioner	john@pathwaynet.com	616/754-5375

Name	Agency/Representing	E-mail	Telephone
Johnson, Blake	Rep. Judy Emmons Office	blakejohnson@house.mi.gov	517/373-0834
Emmons, Rep. Judy	Rep. Judy Emmons Office	judyemmons@house.mi.gov	517/373-0834
Naeyaert, Robin	Rep. Judy Emmons Office	rnaeyaert@house.mi.gov	517/281-5845
Starkweather, Craig	Senator Cropsey's Office		517/373-3760
Whitmore, Robin	WIB	rwhitmore@gratiothealth.com	989/463-1101